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❖ Caught at Last. ❖

A FARCE

IN ONE ACT,

— BY —

Dwight Spencer Anderson.

— X —

— TO WHICH IS ADDED —

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS—ENTRANCES AND EXITS—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE, AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

— X —

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AMES PUBLISHING CO.,
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— X —

AMES PUBLISHING CO.

— CLYDE, OHIO: —

CAUGHT AT LAST.
CAST OF CHARACTERS.

TRUXTON BEACH,.....
ISABEL BEACH,.....*His wife.*
TILLY,.....*Maid.*

—X—

29 A 545

TIME OF PLAYING—40 minutes.

—X—

COSTUMES—Modern.

—X—

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R., means Right; L., Left; R. H., Right Hand; L. H., Left Hand; C., Centre; S. E., (2d E.) Second Entrance; U. E., Upper Entrance; M. D., Middle Door; F., the Flat; D. F., Door in Flat; R. C., Right of Centre; L. C., Left of Centre.

R.

R. C.

C.

L. C.

L.

* * * Reader is supposed to be upon the stage facing audience.

Caught at Last.

SCENE.—Is laid in the upper parlor of a New York hotel—R. E. leads to a balcony, L. E. to ISABEL and TRUXTON'S room; C. E. with draperies, opens into a hall—chairs and table, with an electric lamp burning on it, C.; lights to turn up and down—an unopened box containing a domino on table—TILLY is discovered approaching C. from R. as curtain rises.

Tilly. Ah, here's the domino the Missis ordered for the ball to-night. (*takes up box*) I'll open it and see what it's like. (*starts to undo string*)

Isabel. (*heard call off C. E.*) Tilly!

Tilly. (*drops box*) Yes, ma'am.

Enter ISABEL, C. E.

Isabel. Has my domino come?

Tilly. Yes, ma'am. There it is, ma'am. (*points*)

Isabel. Did my husband leave any message?

Tilly. He hasn't gone away, ma'am. He's out there on the balcony now.

Isabel. Why, he has an engagement to dine at his club to-night.

Tilly. He's waiting to see you, ma'am. He said if you came in you were to stay here until he saw you.

Isabel. Stay here until he saw me!

Tilly. Yes, ma'am. He was hot about something, ma'am.

Isabel. You mean he was angry?

Tilly. Yes, ma'am.

Isabel. What makes you think so?

Tilly. Well, he asked me quite plainly, where the devil you were, ma'am.

Isabel. He did!

Tilly. Yes, ma'am. Of course I wouldn't go so far as to say he was angry, ma'am, but the words he used—

Isabel. What words?

Tilly. Swear words, ma'am.

Isabel. Was his face red?

Tilly. Yes, ma'am, very red. And his eyes oh, how they glared!

Isabel. I've seen him that way before. Jealousy! (looks off R.) Sh-sh!

Enter TRUXTON, R. E., hair disordered, waves in his hand a cabinet photograph, and in striding melo-dramatically toward his wife, stumbles against TILLY.

Truxton. (to TILLY) Get out of here! (exit TILLY C. E.) Caught at last! After a year of married life, I have found you out!

Isabel. Found me out?

Truxton. (angrily) You heard what I said?

Isabel. Be calm, my dear.

Truxton. I am calm. I never was calmer in my life.

Isabel. Very well. Now, what's the matter?

Truxton. Matter enough. I went into your room ten minutes ago—

Isabel. Yes!

Truxton. On your dressing table I found this photograph. (waves it)

Isabel. Yes!

Truxton. It's a man!

Isabel. What of that?

Truxton. Caught! (snaps his fingers) Caught!

Isabel. Truxton, dear, be calm.

Truxton. (with heat) I tell you I am calm! Do I look angry?

Isabel. (smiling a little) Oh no, not a bit.

Truxton. Then let's hear no more of that. Explain this photograph.

Isabel. Let me see it.

Truxton. Let you see it?

Isabel. Why not?

Truxton. Show you my hand? Well, I guess not! If you possess more than one man's picture, name them all!

Isabel. I have no picture except George's.

Truxton. George who?

Isabel. Why, my brother George, of course.

Truxton. This isn't your brother George, I can tell you that!

Isabel. Then there's some mistake.

Truxton. (*hands her photograph*) Does this look like a mistake?

Isabel. (*bursts out laughing*) Why, I'd forgotten all about this picture! It's Gustave Malasca.

(*kisses photo on table*)

Truxton. The actor—his picture in your room!

Isabel. (*sweetly*) Yes.

Truxton. You thought I wouldn't find it, didn't you?

Isabel. Don't be foolish, Truxton. There's no sense in your getting angry—

Truxton. How many times do I have to tell you I'm not angry? I'm in perfect control of my temper. Where'd you get this thing?

Isabel. At the matinee.

Truxton. You went behind the scenes?

Isabel. Of course not.

Truxton. Oh, I see. You met him after the performance, and he took you out to lunch and gave you his photograph!

Isabel. Nothing of the sort. These pictures were given away to everybody who attended "The Charity Ball" this afternoon.

Truxton. Then why treasure it so carefully on your dressing table?

Isabel. A pretty picture like that—

Truxton. A pretty picture like that? Ha! you admire him?

Isabel. Yes, his acting.

Truxton. But you don't put your husband's picture on your dressing table.

Isabel. (*sweetly*) Why should I? I have the original here.

(*points to her heart*)

Truxton. (*softening*) Isabel—perhaps I was a little hasty, you know. Of course you've a perfect right to keep this man's picture in your room if you want to. But it sort of makes me jealous, you see.

Isabel. (*sits*) Yes, I see.

Truxton. That's my way—I can't bear to think you like

anyone else. It's better than being the opposite and not caring whom you like, isn't it?

Isabel. Perhaps—it is.

Truxton. (*sits with chair close to hers*) You know I love you better than anybody else in the world. It's my love makes me act so. Do you remember when you gave me this ring? (*holds up hand*) And I promised never to part with it? Well, I never have, and I never will!

Isabel. (*playfully*) Until your love dies out.

Truxton. That will never be.

Isabel. Yes. (*embraces him*) Never!

Truxton. Now let's forget all about this little misunderstanding. We'll remain at home to-night and spend the evening together like we used to when we were first married. Just sit here and talk to each other.

Isabel. You have an engagement at your club?

Truxton. I'll telephone them not to expect me.

Isabel. But I'm going to the masquerade.

Truxton. Masquerade?

Isabel. Of course.

Truxton. What masquerade?

Isabel. To be given right on the roof of this hotel.

Truxton. (*rises*) Why didn't you say something to me about this before?

Isabel. I told you of it last week, but you said you'd have to go to your club to-night. So I'm going alone. It's just a step.

Truxton. Who is giving this ball?

Isabel. (*rises*) I don't know. It's a benefit for some charity.

Truxton. You'd better not try to fool me!

Isabel. I'm not trying to fool you. I just want to go, that's all.

Truxton. I know you do. But why? Why?

Isabel. For one reason, I've had a domino made expressly for to-night. I haven't seen it yet myself. (*goes to box*) Don't you want to look at it?

Truxton. I want to talk to you. Come here. (*ISABEL goes to him*) Will that actor Malasca be there to-night?

Isabel. How do I know? I'm sure it's immaterial to me whether he attends or not?

Truxton. You can easily prove that statement.

Isabel. What do you mean?

Truxton. You must not go to this ball!

Isabel. Must not?

Truxton. Shall not!

Isabel. You command me?

Truxton. I command you. It is my right.

Isabel. And I refuse! It is my right!

Truxton. You deny the authority of a husband?

Isabel. I deny the authority of a master!

Truxton. Remember, this is a matter of life and death between us. Think before you answer. Are—you—going—to—that—ball?

Isabel. I am!

Truxton. (*striding, R.*) Very well. Go! (*exit R. E.*)

Isabel. (*takes up photo*) The cause of all the trouble! (*starts to tear it*) No, I'll leave it here for Tilly. The way she carries on about that actor, she must be crazy in love with him, the silly little thing! (*takes up pen from table and writes on photo—reads*) "For Tilly."

ISABEL drops photo on table and starts to exit L., when she hears music from the ballroom above, and stops for a moment to listen.

Enter TILLY, C. E., rather cautiously.

Tilly. It's half past eight, ma'am.

Isabel. Well?

Tilly. The ball has just started, ma'am. Aren't you going, ma'am?

Isabel. (C.) If anyone calls, we're not at home, Tilly. Mr. Beach is going to his club for the evening, and I am suffering with a headache.

Tilly. But the ball—

Isabel. I'm not going. Please allow nobody to disturb me. I shall not want anything until morning, so you needn't stay up. (*exit L. E.*)

Tilly. Too bad she ain't going. (*faint strains of music from ballroom are heard*) (*Gustave Malasca gives the ball to-night it said so in this morning's paper. Oh, why has he never answered any of my letters? I can see him up there now, his strong arm around some lady's waist, his lips whispering sweet words into her ear. Oh, Gustave, if your arm was only around my waist—if your lips were only whispering sweet words into my ear! Oh, to be close to you—feel the warm touch of your hand—*

dance with you! (*discovers photo on table*) What's this? His photograph! (*reads aloud*) "To Tilly!" An answer—an answer to my letters! He left this here for me on his way to the dance! (*reads*) "Gustave Malasca in the Charity Ball." Charity Ball! That's the play this week, and that's what they're having up there to-night—a charity ball! It's a message—from him! Oh, if I could only go! (*stops suddenly and hides photo in dress*) Well, why not? The Mr. is going to his club and the Mrs. has retired for the night. (*goes to box quickly and takes out domino*) Nobody would ever know!

Enter TRUXTON, R. E., quickly, surprises TILLY, who tries to hide domino.

Truxton. What are you hiding behind you there?

Tilly. (*exhibiting domino*) I was just looking at Mrs. Beach's domino, sir.

Truxton. Let me see it. (*takes domino in his hand, looks at it a moment intently, then throws it on table with exclamation of disgust*) Do you know anything about an actor named Gustave Malasca?

Tilly. (*startled*) I, sir? Oh, my, how you startled me, sir?

Truxton. (*with suspicion*) So you do know something, hey?

Tilly. Yes, sir, a little. I hear, sir, and see something of him, now and then, sir.

Truxton. Ah—ha! As I thought. Does he come here very often?

Tilly. No, sir, I can't say that he does. Oh, please, sir, don't tell anybody I told you—it's a secret, and he wouldn't want anyone to know it for the world—but he was here to-night, sir.

Truxton. He was! So that's how the wind blows! What time was he here?

Tilly. I don't know, sir.

Truxton. You saw him come in, didn't you?

Tilly. No, sir.

Truxton. What time did he leave?

Tilly. I don't know, sir.

Truxton. Come, come, didn't you see him at all?

Tilly. No, sir.

Truxton. Then how do you know he was here?

Tilly. I—I—that is—he

Truxton. Tell the truth.

Tilly. No—he left a photograph of himself here on the table, sir.

Truxton. (*aside, madly*) So that's how she got it! (*aloud*) Tell me, does this man Malasca play to-night?

Tilly. No, sir, he gives the ball to-night.

Truxton. Malasca gives the ball?

Tilly. Yes, sir.

Truxton. That's all I want to know. (*goes back with a significant glance at the domino*) She goes to the ball, does she? So! We shall see, we shall see! (*exit C. E.*)

Strains of music, louder, are heard. TILLY looks off C. E. and R., then hurriedly dons domino and dances a few steps.

Tilly. I'll risk it!

(*turns light down low in lamp, then exits C. E.*)

Isabel. (*heard call off L.*) Truxton! Truxton!

Enter ISABEL, L. E.

Truxton! gone! And I could have ended the whole quarrel in a minute just by saying I wouldn't go to the ball! But I was too pig-headed. And now he's gone away angry. I don't blame him a bit, I wasn't at all nice about it. I hope he won't come home late. He usually does—from the club. I suppose the only thing for me to do is to go to my room and sit up until he comes.

(*exit ISABEL, L. E.—voices heard outside*)

Enter TRUXTON, C. E., leading TILLY in domino—TRUXTON is completely disguised in black mask, cap and gown. It will be necessary for him to betray his identity to the audience by letting his mask drop, which TILLY does not see; he must also impress the point from time to time, that he thinks TILLY is ISABEL.

Truxton. (*very politely handing her in*) Allow me, my dear madam, we may continue our tete-a-tete here.

Tilly. (*overcome*) Oh, Mr. Malasca, you are so kind!

Truxton. Not at all, my dear madam, not at all. Pray be seated. (*they sit*) The heat is oppressive this evening. Allow me the use of your fan. (*gives her*)

Tilly. Isn't it dark?

Truxton. Shall I turn up the light?

Tilly. No, no, no! I love the darkness. All the romantic things happen at night.

Truxton. How true! When two people are alone in the dark, their souls seem to reach out for each other, and unfold, like flowers!

Tilly. That sounds just like your acting! Oh, I've been looking forward for weeks, to this ball, in the hope that I could come, and meet you face to face.

Truxton. Then you knew I would be here?

Tilly. Why, of course, that's the only reason I came! (*TRUXTON struggles to control his feelings*) I will never forget how grand—how noble you were in "The Lady of Lyons." How wonderfully you spoke those lines:

"It is the prince thou lovest, not the man;
If in the stead of luxury, pomp and power,
I had painted poverty and toil and care,
Thou hadst found no honey on my tongue. Pauline,
That is not love!"

Truxton. You liked it?

Tilly. It went right to my heart! You lived the life of the poor gardener's son. You were Claude Melnotte!

Truxton. Thank you, madam, thank you.

Tilly. One week a rough barbarian in Ingomar, the next a polished New York gentleman in Young Mrs. Winthrop. Captain Swift! Virginus! Romeo!

Truxton. You remember them well.

Tilly. Oh, I have followed you from week to week, through every play, word by word, scene by scene, drinking deep into my heart the grand speeches you lavished upon your audience!

Truxton. (*deprecatingly*) You are very kind.

Tilly. It's not kind at all, I just can't help it! You're so fine! I just can't resist your eyes! During David Garrick I cried something awful.

Truxton. (*subduing his feelings and trying to imitate MALASCA*) I am sure I appreciate such a sincere tribute to my humble art.

Tilly. In the third act where you gave Ada back to her father, you looked straight at me! And I thought that, like David Garrick in the story, you were playing that night, for me, and me alone.

Truxton. I was.

Tilly. Oh, Mr. Malasca, how you flatter me! Why, you don't know who I am!

Truxton. Not know you? You, for whose single joy I have lived to play each week—whose tearful eye and gay laugh I waited for and watched—whose slightest smile meant more to me than plaudits of populace or public print? Know you? Why, I can feel your presence near me now!

Tilly. Oh, say that all over again.

Truxton. I mean it, every word.

Tilly. (suddenly) Did you leave a picture of yourself anywhere to-day?

Truxton. Yes.

Tilly. Where?

Truxton. In the parlor of this hotel—for you!

Tilly. I found it—and here it is—next my heart this moment!

Truxton. Ah!

Tilly. But why did you go away before I had a chance to see you?

Truxton. I thought I saw Mr. Beach coming.

Tilly. Oh, that old fool—he'd never catch on! (*TRUXTON gasps, starts up, but sits again abruptly*) What's the matter?

Truxton. No-thing—nothing at all—I'm a bit nervous at times.

Tilly. Why haven't you answered my letters?

Truxton. Letters! What letters?

Tilly. I have written you a long letter every night for a month.

Truxton. (groans) Oh!

Tilly. (pouting) Yes, and I think you might have answered them—so there!

Truxton. (hesitating) Ah—you see—I get so many letters—so very many letters—my manager ah insists on destroying them.

Tilly. That's a shame! they were perfectly lovely! They told all about my wish to meet you sometime, my dreams of you—my hope to become an actress sometime.

Truxton. You want to go on the stage?

Tilly. Why, I'm taking a correspondence course in acting now! I'm just hungry to go on the stage!

Truxton. Perhaps it can be arranged.

Tilly. Oh, Mr. Malasca, how I thank you for those words!

Truxton. Yes, since the first night I saw your pensive face before me I have hoped to give opportunity to the plastic ability I could discern in your sensitive features. Thoughts of you have made the dull routine of acting glorious—always in rehearsal I worked—toiled—slaved—that I might better satisfy the fair critic whom I had learned to love!

Enter ISABEL, L. E., stands and listens a moment.

Tilly. You love me?

Truxton. Does the sun shine by day and the moon by night? Are the stars fixed to their homes in the sky? Doubt fire burns, but do not doubt I love you?

(*ISABEL gives a low cry and hides behind draperies at C. E.*)

Tilly. What's that noise?

Truxton. (*rises and looks about*) Did you hear anything?

Tilly. (*frightened*) Somebody cried out!

Truxton. (*goes up and looks off C. E.*) Probably it came from the room opposite. (*comes down, sits*) We are alone here. (*takes her hand*)

Tilly. Listen! (*they listen and hear nothing*) I must have been mistaken. (*she feels ring on his finger*) You have a ring on your finger?

Truxton. No, not much of a ring.

Tilly. You have one—I felt it on your hand.

Truxton. Well?

Tilly. Give it to me.

Truxton. What for?

Tilly. To seal your love.

Truxton. No, no, it's only a plain gold ring like hundreds of others.

Tilly. It's yours—I want it.

Truxton. (*starts up and paces, R.*) I cannot—don't ask me.

Tilly. Why not? Just a plain gold ring?

Truxton. I promised never to part with it.

Tilly. Promised a woman?

Truxton. Yes.

Tilly. Then I must have it—I shall have it! Please—please! You told me just now that you loved me—prove

it!

Truxton. That wouldn't prove it.

Tilly. It would! An actress gave you that ring you promised her. Give it to me and you prove your love for me.

Truxton. No, no.

Tilly. Either that or we part.

Truxton. Well—on one condition.

Tilly. Name it.

Truxton. That you give me your answer now.

Tilly. I promise. *(he places the ring on her finger)*

Truxton. And now—your answer.

Tilly. *(comes to his arms)* My darling!

Truxton. *(embraces her)* Then you will come with me?

Tilly. Where?

Truxton. *(stage whisper)* To Chicago—the midnight train.

Tilly. To-night?

Truxton. To-night. Gather what wardrobe you can and meet me at the carriage door in ten minutes.

Tilly. We can be together forever?

Truxton. Forever. Will you come?

Tilly. Yes!

Truxton. *(shakes her roughly)* Woman, woman, what have you done? *(tears off his mask)* Look on my face! *(he tears off her mask and starts back in dismay—he puts his hands before his face, and TILLY rushes out without turning her head so ISABEL does not see her face—ISABEL turns up light, comes down and takes TILLY's place—TRUXTON turns)* What do you mean by—*(sees ISABEL)*

Why—I—that is, you know—

Isabel. *(coldly)* I know.

Truxton. I thought you were going, so I went, too. No, that isn't it.

Isabel. Not quite it.

Truxton. As a sort of a joke—*(they face a moment)* You see—

Isabel. I see.

Truxton. Isabel—

Isabel. *(waves him back)* Oh!

Truxton. My dear—

Isabel. This is why you ordered me to stay at home to-night. And like a fool, I obeyed! And this is my reward

—to find you with a strange woman!

Truxton. Oh, Isabel—

Isabel. So you gave her the ring, did you?—the ring you promised to take from your finger only when your love for me had died?

Truxton. Listen—

Isabel. You love her? Very well, go to her. Don't mistake me, I'm not angry. No, no, no, not angry. I am cool. I am cold. Ice!

Truxton. But—

Isabel. Did you not take that masked woman in your arms and make love to her? (*he nods*) And arrange to elope with her to Chicago to-night?

Truxton. Let me explain—

Isabel. What is there to explain? It's all over. I'm going—away—from—here. (*crosses L.*)

Truxton. Isabel, wait! there's something else! (*with back turned, she waits for him to go on*) I thought you were going to the ball to-night—(*hesitates*) I saw the domino you were going to wear—(*hesitates*) And I tried to find you to—to—

Isabel. (*turns on him*) To trap me!

Truxton. (*groans*) Yes. But I made a mistake and got the wrong woman.

Isabel. (*advances to c.*) Don't lie—you only make it worse!

Truxton. It's the truth.

Isabel. No, no. (*throws her head on table and sobs*)

Truxton. Forgive me. (*she is sobbing desperately*) Go your way, and I will go mine. It had to come to this sooner or later—I am unworthy the love of a good, true woman like you. Good-bye, Isabel. Wherever you go, remember, always, that I love you still. Remember, always, that you may return to me to-morrow or in ten years.

Isabel. (*starts up*) I believe you! But this masked woman—this *Thing* who said she loved you—who is she—where is she? (*starts L.*)

Truxton. It was Tilly.

Isabel. (*incredulously*) Tilly? It couldn't be!

Truxton. It was. She stole your domino and went to the ball. I took her for you.

Enter TILLY, L. E., dressed for street, with domino under her arm.

Tilly. (to ISABEL) Here's your domino, ma'am. (hands it to her—to TRUXTON) Your ring, sir.

(hands it to him, then goes to C. E.)

Tilly. I'm going, ma'am.

Isabel. Tilly!

Tilly. Yes, ma'am.

Isabel. (with a smile to TRUXTON) Don't go. It's all right.

CURTAIN.

THE END.

A Life's Revenge.

Drama in 3 acts, by William E. Sater, Esq., for 11 male and 4 female characters. Time of performance, 2 hours.

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An Antechamber of the Palace of Versailles. The King's rival—Arrival of the brother—A quarrel and an appointment—Introduction to Eloise de Montfort—An Avenue leading to Fournichet's chateau. Arrival of Tiraloo—"Where's my master?"—A quiet situation—Illuminated gardens—A fete and rendezvous. Duel and broken sword—Triumph of Fournichet—The king interferes—Prisoner and jailor—Barber and jailor—Dangerous shaving—Death of Grimvisage—An angel of mercy—Sudden appearance of St. Gaudrey and the revenge—Consent of Eloise—A prisoner and terms of peace—discovery and death signal. Revelations—Death of Marquis and restitution.

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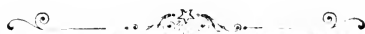
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Uncle Jed's Fidelity; —OR— The Returned Cowboy.

A Comedy Drama, by Bert C. Rawley, for 7 male and 3 female characters. Costumes modern. Time of playing, 2 hours.

—SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS.—

Mr. Western, a strong willed man, objects to his daughter marrying a poor but honest man, and resolves she shall marry his friend, Donald Reeves, a rich man—Isabel refuses—Uncle Jed arrives from the country and intercedes for Isabel, but Mr. Western refuses to believe Donald Reeve a villain—Donald Reeve's forsaken wife arrives and forbids Donald's attention to Isabel—Peregrine Splatter overhears Donald threaten his wife, and becomes his partner for the purpose of bringing him to justice—Col. Western drives Isabel from his house—She returns with Uncle Jed to his country home—Donald Reeves murders his wife and throws the guilt on Isabel's lover, Robert Sheldon—His arrest and imprisonment—Robert escapes and at last brings proof that Donald Reeves is the murderer—Donald arrested. Uncle Jed, Jasper, the negro, Polly and Peregrine Splatter make up the comedy parts—This is a play in which all the characters are evenly balanced. Amateurs will find it a good one. Price 15 cts.

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